



Week 1 Assignment

Overview

Schools can and do influence how their supporting community – parents and other family members, businesses, agencies, and organizations – interacts with students and school personnel. Because research shows that family and community involvement has a positive impact on student learning, schools should strive to increase all levels of community involvement.

In your Week 1 Assignment, you will describe and analyze two of your school's community involvement programs: their goals, their levels of participation and impact on student learning, and various aspects that prevent and promote their success. In Weeks 2-4, you will design a new, or strengthen an existing, community partnership that integrates school, family, and/or community resources to more effectively support student achievement.

Rubric

Use the following Rubric to guide your work on the Week 1 Assignment.

Tasks ↓	Accomplished 10 The evidence suggests that this work is a "Habit of Mind." The educator is ready to mentor others in this area.	Proficient 8 The evidence suggests that performance on this work matches that of a strong educator.	Needs Improvement 6 The evidence does not yet make the case for the educator being proficient at this task.
Analysis of School Involvement Programs	Student clearly identifies and describes two current parent/community involvement programs, the needs the programs address, and the perceived levels of participation and impact on student achievement.	Student identifies two current parent/community involvement programs, the needs the programs address, and the perceived levels of participation and impact on student achievement.	Student identifies one, or fails to identify any, current parent/community involvement programs, the needs the programs address, and the perceived levels of participation and impact on student achievement.
SWOT Analysis	Student demonstrates effective use of a SWOT analysis to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the two parent / community involvement programs.	Student uses a SWOT analysis to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the two parent/ community involvement programs.	Student incompletely uses, or fails to use, a SWOT analysis to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the two parent/ community involvement programs.
Assignment Mechanics	Responses are relevant to course content; no errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation.	Responses are relevant to course content; few errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation.	Responses do not reflect knowledge of course content, lack clarity and depth, and/or include multiple errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation, including APA errors.

Week 1 Assignment, Part 1: Analysis of School Involvement Programs

In Part 1 of this assignment, you will analyze two of your school's current community engagement programs (one that primarily involves parents and one that primarily involves the larger community), to show the student needs they address and who is most involved in the programs. You will then complete a SWOT Analysis on each of the programs you have analyzed to identify each program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

To complete this assignment:

- In the chart, identify two parent/community involvement programs that your school currently has in place. Include one parent program and one community (external partner) program.
- List the student need(s) that each program addresses.
- Rate the current level of participation in each program by the three contributors: school personnel, families, and the overall community. A rating of 1 indicates minimal participation; a 5 rating indicates full participation.
- Rate the current impact of each program's contributors on student learning. A rating of 1 indicates lowest impact on student learning, and 5 the highest impact.
- After filling out the chart, answer the questions provided.

Program Name & Description	Needs Addressed	Level of Participation	Impact on Student Achievement
UPPA: The University Park Preschool Association organization open to families with children ages birth through kindergarten, who live in the University Park Elementary School District.	UPPA's goal is to provide parent education on children's growth and development, socialization between parents and children, and fundraising support for University Park Elementary School. UPPA helps local children meet the families they will be attending Kindergarten with, and enjoy fellowship with area Mothers. The students affected by UPPA are first and foremost the students whose mothers are	Personnel: 1 Families:3 Community:2	Personnel: 1 Families:3 Community:2

	involved in the group. Since the group raises money for the school, then every child on the campus is affected in the long run.		
UP Dad's Club The Dads Club provides the opportunity to meet other University Park Dads in a social environment and to get involved with supporting University Park Elementary in a number of beneficial ways.	Serving on Dads Club is both a great privilege and responsibility to serve the UP community in any way we can. Fathers are encouraged to become involved in one of the various projects that the Dads Club takes on every year. Some fathers might prefer just to get to know a few more Dads and join in some activities. The Dads club affects every child at the school. The Dads volunteer at the school and help run many programs that affect the students at the school.	Personnel:1 Families:4 Community:3	Personnel: 1 Families:3 Community:2

Which program most effectively involves family, school, and/or community?

The school I work at has such wonderful parent involvement that close to 100% of all our parents are involved within the school in some fashion as volunteers, PTA members, etc. Our PTA alone has seventy-two subcommittees. Both of the groups I chose, UPPA and Dads' Club affect our families, school, and community. The UPPA's primary focus is on families getting involved in the school community before the students reach Kindergarten. The UPPA also raises money to help with many of the programs that affect the students of our school. The UPPA holds an annual "Spring Market" that raises thousands of dollars every year for our Elementary School.

Overall, who provides the most support for your school's programs?

Our PTA is remarkable. I have never encountered more involved parents than those in

my school district. The parents, whether working or stay at home parents, are involved in every aspect of our school and school programs. I have not seen any program at my school that was supported by our parents. Our gym was updated by parents and the gym received a climbing wall. When our recess equipment was getting worn down, our parents created a committee to raise money and find the best solution. We now have a wonderful playground, outdoor climbing wall, and special ground services to help our children. With the heat that we have experienced this summer, we now have a new committee trying to find the best awnings for our student pick up areas. The faculty and parents have a strong relationship that helps to make our school a success. The principal is involved in every one of the seventy two (plus) parent committees on campus. The principal ensures that our school vision is always a consideration whenever decisions are being made.

How is program information communicated to parents, the community, and throughout the school? How could the communication be made more effective?

Most of the programs on our campus have a website that is updated regularly. Some programs use Twitter and Facebook as a means to keep their members informed. I am the webmaster at my school and I am often asked to update information or to share links on our school homepage. We send out news folders every Thursday and the content is also posted on the school's webpage. For the UPPA 2011 Spring Market, several of the local news stations had wonderful coverage which helped bolster the revenue. Teachers and parents often receive updates via email.

I do believe the Dads club needs to strengthen their communication. Often I think their primary goal is fun instead of school improvement. Their programs are always entertaining for the students but sometimes disrupt the instructional environment.

Who could become involved in each program to increase the program's effectiveness?

The UPPA often seems like a sorority and the Dads club a fraternity but both are beneficial. Having more teachers involved might help to even out the cliquish atmosphere. Having the groups be open to more individuals would cause a positive environment for the children involved. With the Dads Club they involve the PE coach for the Dads Club golf tournament and they give teachers a gift of money at the beginning of each year. The UPPA does not have any teachers in their group. The UPPA does involve the principal whenever necessary which helps when fundraising occurs for the group. They can know what they are raising funds for.

How could additional participants be drawn into these programs?

I think many of our Kindergarten teachers would appreciate an invitation to join the UPPA so they could become better acquainted with their future students and parent support systems. The Kindergarten team at my campus is very strong and supportive that they would only require a simple invitation to feel a sense of participation. The Dads Club is a little different. The main requirement is to be the father of a UP student. Teachers would have a hard time becoming members since the criterion is for fathers of students to become active in the school.

What needs do students at your school have that are not being addressed? What type of community engagement program might best address those student needs?

We are starting to have an ESL need on our campus. We do not have any committees or support for our non-English speakers at my school. Our community has always been global since we are a university town with SMU just a few streets away. The students of limited English proficiency do not seem to benefit specifically from any of the programs. I am not sure if parents of ESL students do not understand the importance of involvement, if the other parents do not want to get involved with this group or just ignorance that there is the need for a program.

Week 1 Assignment, Part 2: SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool used to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for a program or organization.

To complete this assignment:

- Analyze the programs you selected in Part 1 by completing a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis.

Aspect	Parent Program Dads Club	Community Program UPPA
Strengths: Positive features of the partnership. What are its resources and capabilities on which to potentially build?	Fathers on Dads Club are encouraged to become involved in one of the various projects that the Dads Club takes on every year. Some fathers might prefer just to get to know a few more Dads and	UPPA's goal is to provide parent education on children's growth and development, socialization between parents and children, and fundraising support for University Park

	<p>join in some activities. The Dads Club provides teachers at the beginning of the year \$100 cash for classroom startup. Teachers have full discretion on what they wish to spend the money on. The fathers help with many events and volunteer such as Father/Son Breakfast, Bike Rodeo, Dads serving in Cafeteria, Dads only breakfast with Speaker, Ice Cream Social, Father/Daughter Valentine's Breakfast, Carnival, and Field Day and Picnic.</p>	<p>Elementary School. UPPA helps local children meet the families they will be attending Kindergarten with, and enjoy fellowship with area Mothers. The UPPA's largest fundraiser of the year is the Spring Market which is held on the grounds of the UP Elementary School.</p>
<p>Weaknesses: Sometimes a weakness is the absence of a strength, such as high cost. Other times, a weakness could be the flip side of a strength. Huge involvement can be a strength, but it might be a weakness if you are trying to gain consensus around a change.</p>	<p>The Dads club often seems like Fraternity at a University but it is still beneficial. The Dads like having fun without realizing the interruption to instruction. Having more teachers involved might help to even out the cliquish atmosphere and help the fathers be less obtrusive. The Dads Club involves the PE coach for the Dads Club golf tournament and they give teachers a gift of money at the beginning of each year. The principal is involved with decision making.</p>	<p>The UPPA often seems like a sorority but it is still beneficial. The UPPA does not have any teachers in their group. The UPPA does involve the principal whenever necessary which helps when fundraising occurs for the group. Involving teachers, especially the kindergarten teachers, would benefit the group along with understanding the curriculum and expectations of students.</p>
<p>Opportunities: Potential opportunities for growth or becoming stronger. Examples include the involvement of new people, unexpected funding, and new possibilities within an existing partnership.</p>	<p>The Dads Club spends most of their time doing social activities. If they could use their remarkable gifts in more charitable ways. We live in a large city and our section is very affluent but there are other areas that need the benefit of help. The Dads Club could be more service</p>	<p>The UPPA could begin working with the Librarian and having a type of preschool reading time with stories and arts and crafts. This would benefit the parents, incoming students, and help the UPPA feel as if they are receiving more benefits from the partnership.</p>

	oriented instead of social. The Dads Club could easily involve the staff and students with service. Plus, the students would have more opportunities to help others in need instead of focusing egocentrically.	If they felt more connection to the school they would then be more likely to volunteer or donate more money.
Threats: People or factors that threaten the program. Examples include anticipated downsizing in a partner and the “graduation” of a strong, informal community leader.	The largest threat happening in our area is financial. With the economic downturn the fathers in the Dads Club will have less money to donate to their committee and in term not be able to help the school financially.	Most of the mothers in our area are “stay at home” mothers. The mothers in the UPPA are stay at home mothers with children about to enter Kindergarten. I do see that with the recent financial difficulties families are having a harder time having one parent stay at home. It is possible that with the future financial problems the UPPA might not have as many members to serve on their committee.